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AN EVALUATION OF THE MILITARY FAMILY'S ADJUSTMENT. IMPACT OF FATHER ABSENCE ON PERSONALITY FACTORS OF BOYS, I.

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A PRELIMINARY REPORT OF AN EFFORT TO STUDY THE EFFECTS OF FATHER'S ABSENCE (FA) AND/OR GEOGRAPHIC MOBILITY ON THE MILITARY FAMILY IS PRESENTED. CONTACT WAS ESTABLISHED WITH 65 FAMILIES WHO HAD FIVE TO EIGHT YEAR OLD SONS AND HAD ORDERS FOR AN UNACCOMPANIED FAMILY TOUR OF AT LEAST ONE YEAR'S DURATION IN A NONCOMBAT AREA. PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTS WERE ADMINISTERED TO THE FAMILY TO OBTAIN MEASURES OF INDIVIDUAL ADJUSTMENT AND FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS. PRELIMINARY FINDINGS INDICATE--(1) MILITARY FAMILIES MAY RESPOND DIFFERENTLY TO FA THAN PREVIOUSLY STUDIED FAMILIES, (2) ADAPTATION TO FA BY SUBSTITUTION OF OTHER FAMILY SUPPORTS IS ASSOCIATED WITH FEWER CHILD BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS, (3) FA BOYS EXHIBIT INCREASED MASCULINE STRIVING AND POORER PEER ADJUSTMENT, BUT NO SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN DEPENDENCY BEHAVIOR DETERIORATION AS WELL AS PERSONAL GROWTH OF MOTHER AND SON ARE EXPERIENCED, (5) THE MOTHER'S INCREASED TENSION MAY BE EXPRESSED BY DECREASED TOLERANCE OF THE CHILD'S BEHAVIOR, AND (6) SUPPORT FROM OUTSIDE THE NUCLEAR FAMILY SEEMS CRUCIAL. THE STUDY IS LIMITED BECAUSE THE DATA IS BASED ON TOO SMALL A NUMBER OF SUBJECTS TO PERMIT PRECISE STATISTICAL ANALYSIS. THIS PAPER WAS PRESENTED AT THE 44TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE AMERICAN ORTHOPSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION, WASHINGTON, D.C., MARCH, 1967. (AUTHOR)

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IMPACT OF FATHER ABSENCE ON PERSONALITY FACTORS OF BOYS: I. AN EVALUATION OF THE MILITARY FAMILY'S ADJUSTMENT

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Introduction

Father absence is a predictable and characteristic experience for the family of the career military man. Rapidly changing military technology requires periodic courses of instruction at special training centers. World-wide defense commitments necessitate short and long overseas tours and periods of temporary duty away from home. Even though military orders permit, economic realities often obviate accompaniment by family. Most significant is the so-called unaccompanied, or "hardship" tour, during which the father must be absent from the family for 12 to 13 months. Whether such absences have a cumulative psychonoxious impact on the personality development of children is, as yet, unanswered. A second inquiry into the family and social pathways through which the impact of father absence is mediated to the child seems equally pertinent. A third question relates to the continuing family role of the absent father (and husband). Father absence, for reasons which cannot be indorsed or subsumed by the family, may be substantially compensated for by internal readjustment within the family itself. Such readjustment is energy-economic, family ego-sparing, and tends toward tension reduction and family

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homeostasis. It is at this time that projection may become a mechanism of relative healthier choice, as frustrations are directed to the absent father's doorstep. However, the military family cannot develop such attitudes. The absent father is away on business of national significance, supported and approved by the larger community. This paper is the preliminary report of an effort to study the effects of father absence and/or geographic mobility upon the military family.

Review of the Literature

Many theoretical models of personality development emphasize the significance of the mother as the "primary object" and ascribe operational characteristics of behavior to the father quite outside the mother-child matrix. In a child's microcosmic world, and most especially in the case of boys, the father provides a sense of direction to separation-type experiences and progressive individuation as the child proceeds from one developmental epoch to the next, and toward the larger community outside the family. As Freud and Burlingham[7] have stated, "A boy's progress toward adaptation to the grown-up world . . . leads through stormy phases of his emotional relationship to the father figure."

Burton and Whiting,[5] reporting on a cross-cultural study of the development of sex identity in children, found father absence resulted in cross-sex identification which was either acted out or, more usually, defended against by exaggerated masculine behavior.

With few exceptions, previous studies have been concerned with father absence during wartime, introducing other calculable realities of potential injury or death (which do not originate in the fantasies of the child). Family knowledge of the relationship of the father to actual war dangers may overdetermine the child's fantasies. In a wartime study of 6- through 10-year-old children, Bach[1] found father-fantasies of father-absent boys more similar

to those of girls than were the fantasies of father-present boys. He reported no comparable difference between the two groups of girls. This study raised the questions of cause and psychic mechanisms of feminization of the father-separated child, hypothesizing the increased potency of the mother in such a situation. He further suggested that mothers may mediate the father's absence to the child through "father typing" or personality characterizations of the father, i.e., the way in which the mother (or other people) pictures the absent father to the child. Sears et al.[16] in a doll play study of the effects of father absence in wartime on preschool age children, found that the father-absent boys were less frequently aggressive than father-present boys. No such finding was reported for the girls. Furthermore, Stolz et al.,[18] investigating the effect on the child of the father's return from wartime absence during the child's earliest years, found that boys whose fathers had been absent but were then returned, continued to be somewhat effeminate in overt behavior, but now produced a maximum amount of aggression in fantasy.

Norwegian sailor families have been studied by Tiller[21] and Gronseth.[8] Tiller reported that father-absent children (ages 8-9-1/2) tended to have a high degree of dependency and pseudomaturity, and a larger proportion idealized the father. He felt these findings resulted primarily from indirect effects of father absence, mediated by the fact that father absence for the child also meant husband-absence for the mother. In his view, the mother's reaction to husband-absence was reflected in her treatment of the child, and this treatment, in turn, affected the child. He reported that mothers whose husbands were absent tended to have the following characteristics, as compared with the control mothers: (1) A smaller proportion led active social lives; (2) A smaller proportion worked outside the home; and (3) A larger proportion tended to stress obedience and politeness as contrasted to happiness and self-realization for their children. Examination of the raw data, however, raises a

question as to the strength of the controls, particularly with reference to certain sociocultural factors, since the control mothers were women who had married geographically stable businessmen in the city and the father-absent mothers had married sailors.

Lynn and Sawrey,[11] reporting on the same subject group as Tiller, described that father-absent boys evidenced more immaturity, more masculine striving, with higher compensatory masculinity and poorer peer adjustment than the father-present group. Father-absent girls showed increased dependency responses. This report must raise the same question of adequate controls.

Currently popular theoretical models characterize the disturbed child as a phase in the events of a very long term social process, with his symptoms representing a disturbance in the total family. Vogel and Bell[23] emphasized the facility with which children become involved in tensions existing between the parents, particularly when these represent conflicts in cultural value orientations or conflicts in the relationship of the family to the larger community. This emphasizes the significance of family attitudes toward the military community, a community of functional interdependence rather than of propinquity. Vogel[22] illustrated the mechanisms by which fathers in disturbed families maintained tension-reducing distance from other family members, as by moonlighting. Silber, Perry, and Bloch[17] reporting on the reactions of children to unusual stress, described the child cues from the available or remaining parent. When the parent becomes disorganized and expects support from the child (role reversal) this is a greater source of stress than the disaster itself for the child. These references point up the importance of collateral pathways for mediating the effects of father absence to the child.

Several clinical investigations associate father absence with higher psychiatric casualty rates in children. Pedersen and Sullivan,[14] studied the effects of mobility on the military family. They reported 59% of the

disturbed children referred to a child guidance clinic had some period of extended father absence during the first five years, versus 40% of the control group. Murphey and Zoobuck,[12] reporting on 50 consecutive case referrals of school adjustment problems to a military child guidance clinic, noted 64% of the cases had a family history of father absence for over six months. In rank-ordering those factors in military life which appeared most stressful in the cases studied, the most important was absence of the father from the home. Second in importance was the return of the father. This often appeared to upset the emotional balance established during his absence, which resulted in the rejection of the child by the father and of the father by the child. In several cases, they described a sequence of loss of control during father absence alternating with application of severe controls when father returned.

The stress of temporary father absence seems measurable by the comment of an Air Force wife as reported in a national magazine editorial: "I've gotten used to running things to suit myself, to making the major decisions, to disciplining the children, to being the boss. But now that my man is returning, I must revert to being a woman, to letting him have things his own way."[20]

Any study of father absence in the military must give attention to its occupational corollary, mobility. The social milieu of service families is one of shifting physical surroundings, changing populations, changing mores, and varying family relationships as the family group is separated and brought together again. Children of career servicemen are influenced by customs of the service according to their father's position in particular and the attitude of the community towards the service in general. Kurlander et al.[9] reported a median of 6.0 geographical moves for military children referred to a child guidance clinic, as contrasted to a median of 1.5 for non-military clinic cases. Others have commented on the increasing mobility of American families in general, and a current statistic is that 1 family out of every 5

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moves to a new location each year.

Method

Beginning in December 1964, Regular Army middle rank enlisted men (Grades E-4 to E-6) stationed in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area who were given an alerting order for overseas movement within 90 days were screened for eligibility for the study. Acceptance criteria required that the military man: (1) be married and have his family in the area; (2) have a 5- to 8-year-old male child living in the home; and (3) be on orders for an unaccompanied-by-family tour of at least one year to a non-combat area. These families were contacted directly by our clinic and were asked to participate in a research project designed to study characteristics and experiences of the military family. Participation was defined as including an initial visit to the clinic by both parents and the son, and possible follow-up contacts later on. A sum of $10.00 was paid to each family who participated to cover incidental expenses such as gasoline or babysitting care for other children. All of the families had already received information on the alerting order for overseas movement when initially seen.

Broad sociologic inquiries were made including a number of questionnaires which were administed to the parents. In addition, a battery of standard psychological tests was administered to the parents and to the child. The social and psychological assessment was programmed to be rather extensive, since the number of cases available in the geographic area was small. Individual adjustment measures of the child, the mother, and the father were obtained; assessments of family relationships were also collected to include those of mother-father, mother-child, and father-child.

Not less than 6 nor more than 9 months after the father departed for the hardship tour (some 9 to 12 months after he received the original alerting order), the family was contacted for a second phase evaluation. By the time

of second phase examination, some 17 cases of the 65 had been lost (2 because they no longer wanted to participate; 2 because the father had left the service; 1 because the parents were separated and no longer living together; 2 because the father had died in the interim; and 10 because they failed to respond to repeated attempts to contact them).

A third phase examination is projected to occur 9 to 12 months following reunion of the father with his family. It is anticipated that such an evaluation will permit determination of which changes, if any, measured in Phase II, are irreversible even though father has returned to the family.

Sixty-five families were given a first phase evaluation. Due to a number of factors, the orders of some were changed or cancelled. We were able, at the time of this report, to complete second phase evaluations on 38 of the families, who came to comprise 4 groups: 10 families in which case the father has gone overseas and the family continues to live in the clinic area, called Experimentals (EXP); 12 families in which the father has gone overseas and the family has moved a considerable distance, that is, Experimental-but-Out-of-the-Clinic Area, called (E-O)s; 8 families in which the orders were cancelled and the intact family continues to live in the area, called Controls (Cn); and 8 families in which the orders were modified to direct the military member overseas to a non-hardship area where he currently has his family with him, called Overseas Controls or Special Controls (S-Cn). It thus appeared possible to compare the two variables--separation and mobility--singly and in combination.

Each of the families seen had its own history of father absence and family mobility as a direct result of the career commitment of the father. Fathers in the primary group studied (see Table 1) averaged 13.8 years of active service. Mean length of marriage was 9.3 years. Since the marriage, fathers were subject to major (PCS) reassignments an average of 4.8 times, or approximately every two years. On the average, mothers had 4.0 moves since

TABLE 1

Demographic Data

	Experimentals (EXP) N=10	Controls (Cn) N=8	Experimentals Out-of-City (E-O) N=12	Specials (S-Cn) N=8
FATHER				
Age				
Range	26-39	28-36	27-42	33-38
Mean (Years)	33.1	32.88	32.58	35.63
Rank				
Range	E 4-6	E 5-6	E 5-6	E 5-6
Mean	E 5.3	E 5.38	E 5.42	E 5.75
Years of Service				
Mean	14.7	13.37	12.5	15.63
Length of Present Tour (prior to alertment for overseas assignment)				
Mean (months)	22.3	34	22.21	29.5
Years of Education				
Pre-service	9.6	9.25	10.00	10.75
Since service	11.9	12.0	11.83	12.13
MOTHER				
Age				
Range	23-33	22-37	25-38	29-38
Mean (Years)	28.6	30.25	28.67	34.38
YEARS OF MARRIAGE				
Mean	8.9	8.75	8.75	11.0
NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN FAMILY				
Mean	2.8	3.63	3.42	3.75
CHILD				
Age				
Mean (Years)	5.9	6.10	6.7	6.4
RACE				
Caucasian:Negro	8:2	7:1	11:1	5:3

the marriage and 2.7 moves since the birth of the son who was being studied.

Findings

It should, at this time, be emphasized that the data collected thus far is based on small numbers, and often not sufficient for precise statistical analysis. Our current purpose is to report on the earliest feedback of second phase assessments. At this point, we have not analyzed all of the instruments used.

The findings will be discussed under three major headings: first, changes in family patterns; second, the mother's adjustment; and third, the child's adjustment.

I. Family Adjustments

Social Participation.--Data was requested on the frequency of social and subsistency type activities, using either military or non-military resources. The EXP group showed a strong trend towards decreased utilization of military facilities in activities related to basic family subsistence, and suggestive evidence that the total number of such activities decreases as well (total shopping trips per month, etc.). In the social area, there is a strong trend towards an increase in independent social activity associated with a trend towards a decreased proportion of social activities involving military people or facilities (57% of father-present levels of Phase I). That is, although they continued to live in the same general area, this decrease is only slightly greater for those mothers who moved out of the area (E-Os). The majority of EXP mothers attended church before father left (mean=2.6 times per month) and all maintained or increased their attendance (mean=4.8 times per month) after father left.

Follow-Up Contact with the Fathers Overseas.--Sixty-four percent of the absent fathers report their overseas duties are not different from the previous stateside duties. Seventy-six percent of them state they receive mail from home almost daily, and 76% of them write home almost daily. By this criterion, fathers are strongly committed to active communication within the family system.

Fifty percent of the EXP family group fathers reported the family living expenses were higher at time of Phase II assessment; 33% report their own living expenses were higher. Fifty percent of the EXP group fathers and 37-1/2% of the E-O family group fathers reported they believed there had been undesirable changes in the child during their absence.

Time spent in involvement with family affairs from overseas, reportedly ranged from one hour per week to one father's comment that he regularly spends more than eight hours per week in such activities. Fifty percent of the absent fathers state the family's living situation is known to him and is satisfactory. Several other fathers mention the situation is satisfactory except for his being "missed" by the family.

The data suggest the absent father practices active roles within the family, limited largely by mechanical factors of time and distance.

Seventy-three percent of the mothers reporting believe that their husbands are quite satisfied with the way they are handling family affairs and 64% state that their husbands are fully satisfied with the way they are handling their son.

It may be that this sense of support from husbands helps considerably in day-to-day coping with reality problems.

Fifty-two percent of mothers reporting seem to be making deliberate, frequent efforts to keep father in the center of family life (by using pictures, letters, tapes, discussion, etc.) or similar references. However, there is a suggestion that children work even harder at maintaining father's presence than mother. Thus, 64% of the mothers reporting state that the boy reflects much interest in his father's activities and makes frequent reference to the absent father, indicating, as one would expect, that physical absence of the father does not render him psychologically unavailable to the child. Seventy-three percent of the mothers reporting state the child exhibited some outward concern

about father's condition. It would seem, then, that the child holds to the image and memory of the father with great vigor.

Table 2 reports the responses to selected items from questionnaires adminfstered to the husband-absent mothers on the subject of communication with the absent father.

TABLE 2

Phase II - Communication (Reported by Mothers)

Response	EXP + E-O (N=22)
	Percentage of Group Reporting
At least once weekly by mail (mothers)	94%
Boy communicates directly to father	75%
Father communicates directly to boy	80%
Mother limited news of personal worries	64%

Ninety-four percent of mothers reporting indicate that they communicate with their husbands at least once a week; in 75% of the cases, the boy communicates directly with his father by methods such as dictated letters; 80% of the mothers reporting state that father communicates directly to his son, usually by personal letter; 64% of the mothers indicate that they feel obliged to limit their communication of personal worries to their husbands, with the majority stating that husband was burdened enough without having to carry around serious worries about his family. These results indicate that quite active communication is maintained.

II. Mother's Adjustment

How do husbands and wives look at the anticipated impact on the wife should father absence occur? Sixty-five marital partners were asked to predict the level of difficulty the wife would be expected to have in 15 family role areas commonly assumed by women with children. It was found that in 11 out of 15 role

areas (73%) husbands predicted greater difficulty than did wives in anticipating the wife's probable difficulties. There was no apparent direct relationship between the total number of separations of husband from wife since marriage and the level of anticipated difficulty given father absence. It is clear that, relative to their wives, husbands show greater concern, perhaps unrealistic over-concern. In the EXP group of mothers, it was possible during the Phase II assessment to obtain ratings of actual difficulty after father left. For this group there was no significant relationship between husbands' and wives' Phase I ratings of anticipated difficulty. Also, there was no significant relationship between husbands' ratings of anticipated difficulty in the event of father absence and mothers' Phase II ratings of actual difficulty. However, a positive correlation ($r=+.70$) which was significant at the .05 level was found between the wife's ratings of anticipated and actual difficulty. Wives, in contrast to husbands, can more accurately and realistically predict the actual level of difficulty they will experience.

In reporting the initial impact of father's departure, 75% of the mothers indicated feeling considerable upset or unhappiness. Twenty-five percent indicate they reacted to the separation with "minimal" upset. Two-thirds of the mothers report their actual behavior changed for the worse in that they felt they became more irritable, unsure of themselves, and less tolerant of their children. However, only one felt that the separation imparied her functioning to a significant degree. One-third of the mothers report reacting to the separation with behavior that reflects personal growth or increased competence such as learning to drive or improved efficiency in family budgeting. It would seem, from these self-reports, that while most mothers experience measurable unhappiness at the loss of their husbands, rarely does this unhappiness

reach extreme or disorganizing proportions. It is clear that the separation event is recognized by the mother as a cause for changes in her own behavior. Most mothers believe that they have changed for the worse, but for some the stress of separation becomes a stimulus for satisfying growth and mastery.

III. Child's Adjustment

The mothers' descriptions of the reactions and adjustments of the children are listed in Table 3.

TABLE 3

Adjustment of Children Following Father's Departure (Reported by Mothers)

Response	EXP + E-O (N=22)
	Percentage of Group Reporting
Children "considerably" upset when father departed	68%
Boy more difficult to manage and less well-behaved	68%

Sixty-eight percent of the mothers reporting indicate their children seemed quite upset and unhappy right after their father left, and sixty-eight percent of the mothers reporting state the son became more difficult to manage and less well-behaved after father left. Though these figures are identical, there is a spread across cases. In this regard, EXP mothers report using more spanking and Control mothers less in Phase II than in Phase I. However, these reports pose the question: Does the child's behavior actually change for the worse or is mother's threshold for perceiving problems lower? The difficulty in management of the children may be related to the mother's changed temperament or to specific mother-child conflicts.

Mothers, in each of the four groups, (EXP, E-O, S-Cn, Cn) were asked to report on their son's adjustment at both Phase I and Phase II assessments. The instrument used, the Peterson Child Problem Checklist,[15] yielded scores for over-all adjustment, conduct problems and personality problems. Using these indices, it was possible to compute an index of change toward lesser or greater number of problems, by comparing the mother's Phase I and Phase II ratings. Between-group comparisons are indicated in Table 4. It is well known that reports of behavior may tell as much about the observer's outlook as the subject of the observation. If we assume objective reporting by the mothers, the following findings are evident:

a. EXP boys show a significant increase in over-all problem behavior, particularly in the area of conduct problems, when compared to E-O boys.

b. EXP boys show a trend toward an increase in over-all problem behavior, particularly in the area of conduct problems, when compared to Cn boys.

c. Boys in the S-Cn group show a significant increase in personality problems (i.e., anxiety, withdrawal, etc.), when compared to boys of the E-O group.

Comparison of the EXP with the E-O group suggests a differential form of adaptation given father absence. It seems important that 92% of the E-O group report that they are now living with or near relatives and state that this was the goal of the move, while only 40% of the EXP families who remained in the area after father left report they are living with or near relatives. It appears that father-absent families who move effectively substituted other family supports in the face of father deprivation. The presence of other adults, including father substitutes, enhances prospects for control of the boys' behavior. It may well be that the unavailability of such supports and controls contributed to the increase in control problems, such as rebelliousness, disobedience, and irresponsibility in the EXP group. The trend in the same direction when comparing

TABLE 4

Mothers' Reports of Changes in Child Problem Levels
(From Phase I to Phase II Assessment)

Comparison Groups	Problem Checklist Areas		
	Total	Conduct	Personality
EXP vs E-O	.05	.02	.10
EXP vs Cn	.10	.10	N.S.
EXP vs S-Cn	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.
E-O vs Cn	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.
E-O vs S-Cn	.10	.10	.02
Cn vs S-Cn	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.

the EXP group with the Cn group, which also enjoys father presence and control, is consistent with this interpretation. However, it was found that the EXP boys were significantly younger (mean age=5 years 9 months) than boys in the Cn group (mean age = 6 years 10 months) at the time of Phase I assessment. A similar trend (P=.10) toward significantly younger boys in the EXP group, as compared to the E-O group, was noted. The possibility of age as a determinant exists. Hopefully, the addition of cases as the study progresses will result in comparisons between groups of similar mean age.

Other findings also complicate interpretations. Ratings on the Child Problem Checklist obtained at the time of Phase I and II assessments were also obtained from the child's teacher, when the child was in school. The passage of nine to twelve months between Phase I and Phase II assessments in most cases led to ratings made by different teachers who may well have had contrasting frameworks for interpreting problem behavior. Only in the case of the comparison of E-O mothers, reports of problem behavior changes with teachers' ratings of the same boys was a significant difference found. Mothers of this group, in contrast to teachers, were inclined to report a change in the direction of less over-all problem behavior (p=.10). The possibility of denial of problem behavior

or increased tolerance on the part of this group of mothers is raised. A similar trend (p=.10) is evident in the Cn group ratings of boys by mothers and teachers. Cn mothers also tended to see a change toward fewer problems, when compared to teachers' ratings.

The rather surprising finding that boys in the S-Cn group show a greater number of personality problems, as compared with the E-O group, deserves discussion. The S-Cn group was not subjected to extended father absence; however, other disruptive factors may well have influenced the development of anxiety, self-consciousness, and low self-confidence in boys. Relocation to a new overseas environment with new social norms, customs, and language could be expected to be more disruptive than moving to live with or near grandparents and relatives. In many ways, the S-Cn group is a modified father absence group. In the S-Cn group, 62% were not able to travel concurrently as a family unit to the husband's overseas assignment. Of this group of families who did not travel concurrently, 60% reported the necessity of an additional temporary move, often from on-post housing to a nearby civilian community or to a more distant location with relatives, while waiting their turn for overseas transportation.

Blacky Test Results.--Blacky protocols were analyzed revising Blum's research scales[3] for use with children. Administration and scoring standards were altered in format to provide greater clarity and appropriateness. Parameters selected for scoring were those which seemed most relevant to our research interests, and those reported in the literature as having promise. Phase I minus Phase II difference (d) scores were computed for the EXP and Cn groups, and the Mann-Whitney Test was used to evaluate the significance of difference in the distribution of d scores obtained for the two groups.

Table 5 presents a summary of results for changes on selected Blacky Test variables from Phase I to Phase II. For each variable, we have shown the actual

TABLE 5

Summary of Blacky Test Results

	Distribution of d scores		U	P
	E (N=7)	C (N=7)		
I - A (Oral Craving)	-2, -1, 0, 0, 0, +1, +2	-1, -1, 0, 0, 0, +1, +2	23.5	NS
I - B (Oral Rejection)	-2, -1, -1, 0, 0, +1, +2	-1, 0, 0, 0, +1, +2, +3	16	NS
II - (Resentment Over Deprivation)	-2, -1, 0, 0, +1, +2, +3	-2, -1, -1, -1, -1, 0, +1	14	.208†
IV - (Oedipal Involvement)	-4, -2, +1, +1, +1, +1, +3	-4, -2, -1, 0, +2, +3, +3	20	NS
V - (Fear of Punishment)	-2, 0, 0, 0, 0, +2, +2	-1, 0, 0, 0, 0, +1, +1	25	NS
VI - (Castration Anxiety)	-3, -2, -1, +1, +1, +2, +2	-2, -1, 0, 0, 0, +1, +1	21	NS
VII - A (Identification with Father)	-3, 0, +1, +1, +1, +3, +3	-1, 0, +1, +1, +1, +2, +2	23	NS
VII - B (Identification with Mother)	-1, -1, -1, 0, +1, +1, +3	-1, -1, -1, 0, 0, +1, +2	22.5	NS
VIII - A (Overt Hostility)	0, 0, +1, +1, +1, +1, +4	-2, -1, -1, +1, +1, +2, +3	20	NS
VIII - B (Rejection Feelings Relative to Sib)	0, +1, +1, +1, +1, +2, +4	-2, -1, -1, -1, 0, 0, +2	6.5	.024*
VIII - IX (Hostility Towards Sib)	+1, +2, +2, +2, +2, +3, +3	-3, -2, -2, 0, 0, +1, +1	1	.002*
IX - (Guilt Ridden Hostility Towards Sib)	-3, -2, -1, -1, 0, +2, +3	-2, -1, 0, 0, 0, 0, +1	21.5	NS
X - (Positive Perception of Self and Father)	-2, -2, 0, 0, +1, +2, +2	-2, -1, -1, 0, 0, +1, +1	20	NS
IV - 3 (Prefers Mother)	-1, -1, -1, -1, 0, 0, +1	-1, 0, 0, 0, 0, +1, +1	14	.208†

NOTE.-- NS is shown whenever the p level exceeded .25 (i.e., chance occurrence greater than 1 out of 4).

distribution of d scores within the EXP and Cn groups, the statistical value of U, and the probability of such a value occurring by chance. A minus sign signifies a lower score at Phase II testing than Phase I; a plus sign signifies a higher score; and a zero signifies no change. Proabilities are reported on the basis of two-tailed tests.

As can be seen from Table 5, only two findings are statistically significant at below the .05 level, and they are closely related. EXP group boys express much more negative, distressing feelings to a picture showing Blacky being excluded from a scene where Mama and Papa are being affectionate toward the sibling, Tippy. In addition, EXP group boys focus more hostility directly at Tippy than do Cn group boys.

It appears then that "father-absence boys" are subject to strong feelings of rejection and rivalry in relation to their sibs, and, in fantasy at least, vent clear anger towards them. Since the degree of overt hostility, on the Blacky, does not differ significantly between the groups, it does not seem that the greater expression of hostility towards sibs derives from a more generalized increase in aggressive fantasy. Instead the data suggest that heightened sibling rivalry becomes a focus of frustration for "father-absence boys" which triggers hostile affect and perhaps behavior. This notion may offer a clue as to one possible mechanism mediating the higher incidence of problem behavior (particularly conduct problems), reported by mothers of EXP group children. The fact that teachers did not note such an increase in problem behavior, supports the possibility that troublesome conduct occurred in the immediate vicinity of the home and around the sibs.

The Blacky results indicate a weak trend ($p=.203$) in the direction of increased resently over maternal deprivation and decreased preference for being with mother in the EXP group boys. Contrary to our expectations, there were no significant differences between father-absence and non-absence groups on variables relating to sexual identification, oedipal involvement, anxiety over body harm or punishment, and perception of father.

However, the lack of difference in these areas needs to be considered in relation to the age of the children and the length of father absence. For example, IT Scale findings, also obtained, clearly reveal that sex-role differentiation was well established in all the boys at the time of Phase I testing. One might reasonably believe that father absence would have had greater influence on sexual-role development during earlier, more formative years than those sampled currently. Furthermore, the effects on personality development of separation of varying lengths is still an open question. Perhaps a more extended period of absence would have produced changes not visible in the present study's 6 to 9 month follow-up. Taken together, the Blacky Test results point away from marked alterations in sex role orientation or sex role conflicts following father absence.

Structured Doll Play Test.--This test was administered to each EXP and Cn child, utilizing the technique standardized by Lynn.[10] The data were analyzed employing the Mann-Whitney Test to compare the Phase I-Phase II difference between EXP and Cn groups, as in the case of the Blacky. There was no significant difference between EXP and Cn groups in oedipal, dependency, or masculine or feminine identification factors. This was again contrary to expectations. There was a trend toward increased aggression, increased feelings of personal guilt, and increased depression in the EXP group, but this was not statistically significant. The EXP group showed an increase in independence-maturity behavior to the .05 level of significance.

When the Blacky and the Structured Doll Play Test are viewed together, there is evidence that the changes in the EXP group are largely those of increased hostility and rivalry toward siblings and accelerated evolution of independence and maturity strivings. The absence of other changes may reflect that

the masculine role is not debased (i.e., in this father-absent group the mothers continue to depend on the father for support with some surrogate functions). As a result, the child's masculine strivings are protected.

Conclusions

The findings reported thus far are preliminary in nature and it is anticipated that further data collection will permit more conclusive analysis. The present data provide a sampling which encourages the following general comments:

1. The military family may respond somewhat differently to father absence than families previously studied. Thus, mothers report increased rather than decreased independent social behavior. Absent fathers exercise an active role within the family system. The mothers are supported by feelings of the husband's approval of her management of the home. She is active in keeping father in the center of family life. The child shows continuing interest and investment toward the absent father.
2. Adaptation to father absence by substitution of other family supports, such as by relocating to live near relatives, was associated with significantly less child behavior problems than was reported by the families who decided to stay on in the area when father left. This latter group often had to give up government quarters on post and move off post to more peripheral housing. In effect, one group moved toward a supporting community, while the second group moved away from it.
3. Our findings agree with previous studies of father-absent boys describing increased masculine striving and poorer peer adjustment. Our findings disagree with previous studies in that we found no significant difference in dependency behavior, oedipal fantasies,

or alterations in sex-role orientation when compared with the father-present group of boys. Earlier reports that father-absent boys become more feminine and less aggressive are not supported in our findings.

The career-relevant, community-approved absent father seems buffered against depreciation in family role. Maternal and community acceptance of hardship tours as appropriate behavior serve to mitigate the son's guilt and inchoate feelings of abandonment, with the potential for rejection of masculine identification.

4. Measurable reactions to father (husband) absence are experienced by both mother and son. While the majority of mothers report that both they and their sons experienced initial unhappiness and some deterioration of behavior, some state reactions in the direction of personal growth. Fathers, relative to their wives, show greater concern and perhaps unrealistic over-concern about the anticipated negative impact of father absence. Wives, on the other hand, can more accurately and realistically predict the actual level of difficulty they will experience.

5. Mothers' upsetness and increased tension may be expressed through decreased tolerance of the child's behavior. The EXP boys show an increase in conduct problems, hostility, and rivalry towards siblings. It appears that the stress of father absence on mothers is associated with increased sensitivity to rejection on the part of the boys. The specific dynamics of the mother-child relationship needs further study.

6. The influence of support from outside the nuclear family seems to be crucial in determining the over-all family reaction to

father absence. Mothers who return to a familiar milieu and relatives report less distress. The importance of such resources is highlighted by the observation that even the mothers who do not turn to the extended family locus, nonetheless, do not turn to the military community for gratification of their increased social hunger.

The existence of a gap between need for special support and actual realization within the ideal of a service community in which membership continues encourages the development and provision of substitutive experiences, ego-supporting for the family with programmed father absence.

The beginnings of such a program are clearly illustrated by activation, within the past several years, of (a) the Army Community Services Program, an activity being developed at all major posts for the purpose of mobilizing community resources to respond to special military family problems and needs, and (b) provision of on-post military housing with full Army community support for father-absent families at selected posts.

Additional programs developing constructive alternatives and increased support for families under special stress are needed.

7. Broader community programming could include increased focus on the value of camp and recreational programs which provide relationship with father-surrogates, and even consideration of the importance of increased numbers of male teachers in the elementary school system.

In summary, family adjustment to father absence is multidetermined and is best described as a function not only of the military but of the total community as well. Therefore, responsibility should be shared by both military and civilian agencies to program for special needs of father-absent families. Increased collaboration between these two major value systems could provide more specific resources and effective support for families who are subject to such stress.

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